

Available online at www.sciencedirect.com**ScienceDirect**

Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences 233 (2016) 302 – 306

Procedia
Social and Behavioral Sciences

Annual International Scientific Conference Early Childhood Care and Education, ECCE
2016, 12-14 May 2016, Moscow, Russia

Personality predictors of vandal activity at preschool age

Irina Vorobyeva ^a, Olga Kruzhkova ^{*}, Marina Krivoshekova ^b

^aDepartment of Acmeology and Management, Ural State Pedagogical University, Kosmonavtov st. 26, Ekaterinburg, 620017, Russia

^bDepartment of Professionally-Oriented Language Education, Ural State Pedagogical University, 26 Kosmonavtov st., Ekaterinburg, 620017, Russia

Abstract

The article describes the causes of children's vandal activity at preschool age. Among others, one of the most important problems is to reveal children's inability to show pro-social self-realization in conditions of preschool. The results of the study (expert assessment of the behavior of 65 preschoolers aged 4-6 years old who attend kindergarten), define the basic personality predictors of vandal activity, which include focus on high performance, low personal resources and high behavioral activity. The article suggests that through cooperative efforts by parents and educators will create situations of success for preventing vandalism in children.

© 2016 Published by Elsevier Ltd. This is an open access article under the CC BY-NC-ND license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>).

Peer-review under responsibility of the organizing committee of ECCE 2016.

Keywords: personality predictors, vandal activity, preschool age, destructive activity, interaction with objects of material environment

1. Introduction

Spread of vandal behavior in modern society raises the awareness of the need for studying its causes and genesis [1]. Manifestation of destructive activity is not a problem of adolescence. This problem has deeper roots and is linked with the specifics of a child's development and education a child at early age stages. It is the interaction with adults in a family and preschool that helps children to learn the norms and rules of conduct with their own things and those belonging to others. Children discover and recognize that making harm to things is a way to relax, express strong emotions (as in case of defense replacement) or a way to influence other people (children's keying) [2].

Educators and other preschool specialists often face children's destructive behavior, but in most cases they find explanation in the shortcomings of family education. And it's not far from the truth. Many authors refer to the origins of children's destructive behavior formed in the family (I.V. Vorobyeva et al. [1], L.S. Pagani [3], L.P. Gaik [4], and others.). So, Calkins & Keane [5] say that the properties of a child's self-regulation mechanism

^{*} Corresponding author. Tel.: +7-912-245-5458

E-mail address: galiat1@yandex.ru

should be of paramount importance in the efforts to curb children's destructive activity. Equal relations in the family are important moderators of more proximal mechanisms of child's self-regulation at the period of early ages. It is necessary for the development of pro-social behavior.

At the same time, we must understand that vandalism in the form of breakage, damage of one's own or others' property may be the result of formation of the active side of a child's personality (which is called "subjectivity" in Russian psychology). Demonstration of various forms of activity during an interaction with objects enriches the child's experience. It also makes it possible to understand interpersonal relationships and rules of their building. In this case, even destructive activity, sporadically manifested by a child, will be an essential element of personal development. And people's reaction to it becomes a predictor of the formation of personality borders and its effective self-realization.

However, vandal actions committed by a preschool child may be an element of tactical actions aiming to achieve other goals. And if that goal is reached, there will be a confirmation of their validity and effectiveness and their strengthening in child's behavior. In consequence, the admissibility of actions which are internally destructive (vandal) for children in relation to the material environment can contribute to the appearance and development of more serious deviations in their behavior.

At the same time these personality characteristics which have been formed earlier or are still being formed may create preconditions for a conscious and unconscious choice of a model for destructive interaction with the material environment. However, the list of personal characteristics data is not clearly defined.

2. Method

The goal of the study was to identify possible determinants of preschoolers' personal inclinations to vandal activity in preschool. To achieve this objective an expert assessment of the behavior of 65 preschoolers (of 4-6 years of age), who attended kindergarten, was carried out. The experts were preschool educators (10 persons), a methodologist and a psychologist. The evaluation was carried out with the help of the questionnaire "Evaluation of subjective characteristics", which was modified on the basis of the methodology "Biography of subjectivity" (O.I. Motkov) [6], and the monitor maps of the child's attitude to his own and others' toys that was developed in accordance with the author's approach to the understanding of motives of vandal behavior (I.V. Vorobyeva, O.V. Kruzhkova, S.A. Ostrikova) [7]. To process the data we applied clustering and regression analyzes, calculations were made by using the statistical package IBM SPSS Statistics 19.0.

3. Results and discussion

Initially, all the results of the experts were subjected to two-step cluster analysis. With a high degree of confidence (at $p \leq 0.01$), the sample of preschoolers was divided into two groups. The first group included children who were inclined to frequent vandal activity in relation to their own and others' toys. The second group included children inclined to occasional vandalism or unwilling to resort to it altogether. Subsequently, in each of these groups we conducted regression analysis, which found a model of possible determinants that lead to a destructive form of children's interaction with objects of the material environment (their own or others' toys).

As a result, for the first group predictors of vandalism was identified in destructive relation to their own and others' toys (Table 1). The characteristics of the models are $R^2=53.1\%$, $F=4.2$, $p=0.034$ and $R^2=92.2\%$, $F=71.7$, $p=0.000$ accordingly.

Table 1. Regression model for the sample of children with high vandal activity

Predictors	Coefficient, β	The level of significance, p
In relation to their own toys		
Self-independence	-0.630	0.018
Ability to control emotions	-0.683	0.040
Desire for average and high results	1.042	0.009
In relation to others' toys		
Creativity	-0.713	0.000
Desire for average and high results	1.455	0.000

The second group showed a little different relationship in a situation of destructive games with their own and others' toys (Table 2). The characteristics of the regression models were $R^2=28.8\%$, $F=6.7$, $p=0.001$ and $R^2=25.3\%$, $F=5.2$, $p=0.004$ accordingly.

Table 2. Regression model for the sample of children with low vandal activity

Predictors	Coefficient, β	The level of significance, p
In relation to their own toys		
Self-independence	-0.585	0.002
Activity	0.496	0.009
Harmony	0.294	0.033
In relation to others' toys		
Activity	0.432	0.019
Desire for self-development	-0.794	0.002
Awareness of personality	0.603	0.014

These results suggest that children that focus on achieving success and are often unable to respond to their failures adequately. They show a low level of autonomy in behaviour and commit destructive activity in relation to their own toys. Such children also break others' toys when there is a high level of claims and lack of creative ability. This behaviour can be identified as another way of expressing one's emotions or transferring one's aggression to inanimate objects with tangible pressure from adults (educators and parents).

Preschoolers with no record of systematic vandal activity tend to be more independent, moderately active and able to make critical assessment of their behaviour when interacting with their toys. In situations when they interaction with others' toys, they are also more restrained in manifestation of their activity, and are focused on generating new knowledge, experience and skills, but are not inclined to reflection of their behaviour.

So, we can say that children who actively demonstrate destructive behaviour in relation to material objects have problems in the technological aspects of self-realization, but they are highly motivated for it. For them, a situation of success is significant, as it attracts positive attention to them from the social environment. But in the absence of opportunities (reduced creativity, lack of autonomy in decision-making, unformed skills of practice and game activity) it is impossible for them to receive positive attention and their destructive activity

compensates the deficit with negative attention. This fact has serious consequences in the future. The consolidation of this model of behaviour leads not only to preservation of high vandal activity, but also contributes to the development of more serious forms of children's deviant behaviour.

In general, it is worth noting the fact that personality characteristics are more predictors of vandal activity in children who are more inclined to it. Children's activity is developed in a specific line because of the prevailing personality characteristics. It contributes to the appearance of situations of destructive activity. At the same time, in case of children that commit vandal acts situationally (sporadically), the reasons for their destructive activity may be of much wider scope.

4 Conclusion

So it can be said that for certain groups of children (who often show destructive activity in relation to the material environment) their personal features, associated with the active side of their personality, really contribute to a wider dissemination of the elements of vandal activity. And a perfectionist's attitude to oneself becomes the "start" for vandal activity. However, the development of perfectionism may be due to parents' high expectations and requirements. If there are insufficient personal resources of successful self-realization (reduced creativity, self-independence, self-regulation) the child is experiencing an intrapersonal conflict between the desire to live up to the expectations of significant adults and the impossibility to implement it in his activities. Under these conditions, the probability of a child opting for destructive activity increases.

Children from the non-conventional group of risk, who demonstrate situational or rare vandal activity usually commit destructive actions with objects because of excessive activity of their personality (search for new ways of self-realization, opportunities of reassessment, negligence, etc.) and as a result of a tactical response to the damage caused by other people. However, what is of importance for this group of children is not only their personal characteristics, but also environmental conditions materially and socially.

Thus, in the preschool psychological service, educators and parents should pay special attention to the training and development of children of this age. As shown in the studies by K.Y. Beard, G. Sugai [8], stable positive results may be achieved by involving educators and parents in the prevention of early forms of destructive activity and anti-social behaviour in children. Equally important is provision of situations of success for children in kindergarten and the family.

References

- [1] Vorobyeva I.V., Kruzhkova O.V., Krivoshechekova M.S. The genesis of vandalism: from childhood to adolescence // *Psychology in Russia: State of the Art* 2015; 8(1): 139-156.
- [2] Koval N.A., Ivanova Y.A. Psychological determinants of self-affirmation of the preschool child in families with a high level of claims // *Bulletin of the University of Tambov. Series: Humanities* 2013, 7 (123) : 122-127 [in Russian]
- [3] Pagani, L.S. The Influence of Family Context on the Development and Persistence of Antisocial Behavior. In *The Development of Persistent Criminality*. Ed. by J. Savage. Oxford: Oxford University Press; 2009.
- [4] Gaik, L.P., Abdullah, M.C., Elias, H., Uli, J.. Parental attachment as predictor of delinquency. *Malaysian Journal of Learning and Instruction* 2013; 10: 99-117.
- [5] Calkins, S.D., Keane, S.P. Developmental origins of early antisocial behavior // *Development and Psychopathology* 2009; 21(4): 1095-1109.
- [6] Motkov O.I. Personality and mind: nature, structure and development. Samara; 2008. [in Russian]
- [7] Vorobyeva I.V., Kruzhkova O.V. (2011). Diagnostic options of motives of vandal behavior // *Bulletin of South Ural State University. Series: Psychology* 2011; 42(259): 35-40. [in Russian]

[8] Beard, K.Y., Sugai, G. (2004). First step to success: An early intervention for elementary children at risk for antisocial behavior // *Behavioral Disorders* 2004; 29(4): 396-409.